

8 Emirati Princesses Found Guilty of Human Trafficking
ABU DHABI (Dispatches) – Eight princesses from the United Arab Emirates have been convicted of human trafficking and given fines and suspended prison terms by a Belgian court.
The Brussels criminal court handed the eight women – a mother and her seven daughters – from Abu Dhabi's ruling Al Nahyan family 15-month suspended sentences for human trafficking and degrading treatment of their servants, said the princesses' lawyer, Stephen Monod, in a statement.
"Belgian justice has appropriately assessed this case which has generated many misconceptions," he added.

Syrian Forces Advance on Dayr al-Zawr

Qatar Slams Demands by Saudi, Allies as 'Unrealistic'



Syrian pro-government forces flash the victory sign on top of a tank after taking control of the northern Syrian town of Maskanah from Daesh terrorists on June 5, 2017.

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) – Syrian army forces, supported by allied fighters, have reportedly managed to advance on the Daesh-held eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr for the first time since 2014 days after an Iranian missile strike against terrorist positions there.

Backed by pro-government forces, "the Syrian army entered Dayr al-Zawr Province from the southeast, near the Iraqi border," the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said.

SOHR Head Rami Abdel Rahman

noted that the Syrian forces had advanced eight kilometers into the province and were just 12 kilometers from the key T2 oil pump.

The Syrian forces now control part of Dayr al-Zawr city and a nearby military airport, but Daesh is in control of most of the provincial capital.

Earlier this month, the Syrian troops reached the eastern border with Iraq and they were reported to be in control of an 85-kilometer stretch of the frontier.

The fresh gains came less than a

week after the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) pounded Daesh headquarters in Dayr al-Zawr with six medium-range ballistic missiles fired from western Iran.

The missile attack killed more than 170 terrorists and inflicted heavy damage on their equipment and systems, the IRGC said in a statement. The strike was conducted in retaliation for the June 7 terror attacks in the Iranian capital, Tehran.

Separately, drone footage showed smoke rising above the al-Waer district on the outskirts of Homs city,

where fighting is underway between Syrian troops and terrorists. The pro-government forces recaptured Ard al-Washash, al-Waer Dam and Al-Waer Canyon region.

The Syrian fighters further retook almost the entire Ayn Tarma Valley in east Damascus and several sites in the southern part of the city such as al-Jisr neighborhood.

In another development on Friday, a bomb blast hit the al-Furqan neighborhood of the city Aleppo, killing four people and wounding 30 others.

Aleppo police chief said the bomb was planted beside a trash bin, but media reports said the explosion was caused by a mortar fire.

Over the past few weeks, tensions have escalated in Syria between the government forces, the U.S. and Russia.

In two occasions in June and May, U.S. warplanes attacked Syrian military forces near the town of At-Tanf, claiming they posed a threat to U.S. forces, an allegation rejected by Damascus.

Last week, a U.S. Navy F/A-18 Super Hornet shot down a Syrian SU-22, which was conducting an operation against Daesh terrorists on the outskirts of the city of Raqqah.

The shutdown led Moscow to announce a halt to a hotline with the U.S. meant to minimize incidents in Syrian airspace and vow to track U.S.-led coalition aircraft in central Syria as "targets."

DOHA (Dispatches) – Qatar says the demands presented by Saudi Arabia and three of its allies that have imposed a blockade on Doha are not "realistic", as the unprecedented diplomatic crisis in the Persian Gulf region seems headed for a stalemate.

"We are reviewing these demands out of respect for... regional security and there will be an official response from our ministry of foreign affairs," Sheikh Saif al-Thani, the director of Qatar's government communications office, was further quoted as saying by Reuters on Saturday.

He added that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had recently called on the boycotters to draw up a list of grievances that was "reasonable and actionable."

"This list does not satisfy that criteria," Sheikh Saif added.

Meanwhile, Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that Doha had received "a paper, on June 22, containing demands from" Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, confirming reports by news agencies on Friday that Doha had been given a copy of the 13-point demand list by Kuwait, a key mediator in the crisis, the day before.

"The State of Qatar is currently studying this paper, the demands contained therein and the foundations on which they were based, in order to prepare an appropriate response," added the statement by Qatar's Ministry

of Foreign Affairs. The wealthy Persian Gulf country is given 10 days to look into the demands and comply with them.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the UAE severed ties with Qatar on June 5, officially accusing Doha of supporting "terrorism" and destabilizing the region. Qatar, however, has slammed the measures as unjustified, saying they are based on false claims and assumptions.

In their apparent bid to secure U.S. support and that of the Zionist regime, Riyadh, Manama, Cairo and Abu Dhabi suspended all land, air and sea traffic with Qatar, expelled its diplomats and ordered Qatari citizens to leave their countries.

To further pressure Qatar, Saudi Arabia has totally closed its land border with its tiny neighbor, through which much of Qatar's food supply crossed. Iran and Turkey are now providing Qatar's required food supplies. The Persian Gulf Arab states further gave Qataris two weeks to leave their countries and ordered home their own citizens living in Qatar.

The four Arab countries have demanded that Qatar shut down the Doha-based Al Jazeera broadcaster, sever diplomatic ties with Iran, close down a Turkish military base in Qatar and pay an unspecified sum in reparations.

Doha has reached out to the boycotters for de-escalating negotiations but has said it will not allow its neighbors to dictate its sovereign affairs. It has also said it will not enter negotiations unless the blockade is lifted.

Meanwhile, a senior United Arab Emirates official said on Saturday that if Qatar did not accept an ultimatum issued by Arab states which imposed a boycott this month on the tiny Gulf Arab nation, "the alternative is not escalation but parting ways".

The 13-point list of demands from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bahrain and the UAE, which Doha has said are not reasonable or actionable, include closing Al Jazeera television network, curbing ties with Iran, shutting a Turkish base and paying reparations.

"The alternative is not escalation, the alternative is parting of ways, because it is very difficult for us to maintain a collective grouping," UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash told reporters.

The punitive measures against Qatar have drawn condemnation from rights groups, including Amnesty International, which says the diplomatic dispute has been toying with thousands of lives.

The coordinated move against Doha is spearheaded by Riyadh, which often manages to have its vassal states fall into line. Saudi Arabia itself is known as the main sponsor of the violent Wahhabi terrorists it has accused Qatar of supporting. Some analysts believe the Saudi anger is rather because Qatar acts more independently of Riyadh, including its relations with Iran.

Iraqi Popular Forces' Role in Fighting Terror Hailed

BAGHDAD (Press TV) – Iraq's federal police chief has praised the Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), commonly known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, for contributing significantly to the fight against the Daesh terrorist group.

"The Popular Mobilization Units are a vital part of Iraq's official defense system, which has been backed by the Iraq parliament," Lieutenant General Raed Shaker Jawdat told Press TV.

He also stressed that the Iraqis were "very proud" of the PMU as they "have led the most impressive epic and heroic battles."

Since the beginning of the counter-terrorism operation in Iraq, the PMU have provided significant and essential support for rebuilding security apparatuses in the Arab country, he said, noting that Iraq is now secure thanks to Hashd al-Sha'abi.

The commander further hailed recent operations along the Iraq-Syria border as a great achievement and a strategic move to prevent terrorist organizations from boosting their presence in the country.

Hashd al-Sha'abi was formed after the rise of Daesh in Iraq in 2014. In the early days of Daesh's terror campaign, the volunteer fighters played a major role in reinforcing the Iraqi army, which had suffered heavy setbacks in the face of lightning advances of the terrorists.

Currently, they are actively cooperating with the Iraqi military and allied groups in a large-scale operation to fully liberate the northern city of Mosul, the de facto capital of the Daesh terrorist group in Iraq.

Meanwhile, at least a dozen of people have lost their lives after a suspected member of the Daesh



Members of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), commonly known as Hashd al-Sha'abi, march during a parade marking the International Quds Day, in Baghdad, Iraq, June 23, 2017.

terrorist group blew himself up among Iraqi civilians fleeing the Old City of Mosul, as the terror group is drawing its last breaths in the embattled northern city.

"We received 12 people killed and more than 20 wounded in our field hospital, including women and children," Ahmed Hashem, a medical official from a nearby field hospital,

said on Friday.

The carnage came as more than 90 percent of the once militant-held city has been liberated from the clutches of the terror group and streams of civilians are currently fleeing the newly freed parts under the protection of Iraqi troops.

On Wednesday, Daesh also blew up Mosul's 800-year-old Grand al-Nuri Mosque, where the terrorist group's leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the formation of a so-called caliphate after capturing the city in 2014 and declared the ill-fated city as the group's de facto capital in the Arab country. The mosque's iconic ancient leaning minaret was also destroyed in the bombing.

Shortly after the destruction of the iconic mosque, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi described the event as Daesh's "official declaration of defeat."

UN Rejects Zionist Regime's Claims About Hezbollah

NEW YORK (Dispatches) – The United Nations has dismissed the Zionist regime's accusations that Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement is setting up observation posts on the border under the guise of an environmental NGO.

Earlier this week, the occupying regime's military published photographs and footage showing what it claimed to be Hezbollah observation posts established on behalf of "Green Without Borders"

near the frontier with the occupied territories.

Zionist Ambassador to the UN Danny Danon sent a letter of protest to the UN Security Council, denouncing the alleged "dangerous provocation" and accusing Hezbollah of carrying out undercover reconnaissance activities.

The council should "demand that the government of Lebanon dismantle these observation posts

immediately, and prevent any future activity of Hezbollah and its affiliates in southern Lebanon, particularly near the Blue Line," he said, referring to the UN-drawn boundary between Lebanon and the occupied lands.

On Friday, however, UN spokeswoman Eri Kaneko rejected Tel Aviv's allegation against Hezbollah and said that members of Green Without Borders had only planted trees in the area over

the past years.

She stressed that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) "has not observed any unauthorized armed persons at the locations or found any basis to report a violation of [Security Council] Resolution 1701," passed at the end of the 33-day Zionist war on Lebanon in the summer of 2006.

UNIFIL remains in contact with the Lebanese armed forces on

monitoring the border to ensure there are no violations "and to avoid any misunderstandings or tensions that could endanger the cessation of hostilities."

The 33-day war, which killed more than 1,200 Lebanese, ended on August 14, 2006, after a UN-brokered ceasefire went into effect.

Since then, UNIFIL has also been charged with monitoring the cessation of hostilities.